

[Early Songs and Ballads]

W13926

Beliefs & Customs — Folkstuff

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Form [md]3 Folklore Collection (or Type)

Title Early songs and ballads

Place of origin Portland, Oreg. Date 12/2/38

Project worker Sara B. Wrenn

Project editor

Remarks

Form A

Library of Congress

Circumstances of Interview

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date December 2, 1938.

Address 505 Elks Bldg., Portland, Oregon.

Subject Early Songs and Ballads.

Name and address of informant Mrs. Cora Jamerson 1917 SW Third St, Portland, Oregon.

Date and time of interview December 2, 1938.

Place of interview 1917 SW Third Ave., Portland, Oregon.

Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant

Encountered her while seeking for Mrs. McCrath, deceased.

Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you —

Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Apartment living room of small apartment house, a wooden structure in a “rundown” neighborhood. Fairly comfortable though crowded room. A large kitchen adjoined. The living room appeared to be also the sleeping quarters, in the usual two-room apartment manner.

Form B

Library of Congress

Personal History of Informant

Federal Writers' Project

Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date December 5, 1938

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon.

Subject Early Songs and Ballads.

Name and address of informant Mrs. Cora Jamerson 1917 SW Third Street, Portland, Oregon.

Information obtained should supply the following facts:

1. Ancestry
2. Place and date of birth
3. Family
4. Places lived in, with dates
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments with dates
7. Special skills and interests
8. Community and religious activities

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9. Description of informant

10. Other points gained in interview

1. Scotch.

2. Kelso, Washington, 1871.

3. Daughter of John Ayers and Monterey Ann Havird Ayers.

4. Kelso, Washington, Forest Grove and Portland, Oregon.

5. Public school of Forest Grave.

6. Taught country public school when young. Later learned and followed trade of dressmaking, a trade she still pursues. At present in charge of apartment house where she lives.

7. None other than above.

8. No particular religious affiliations. Sang in choir when young.

9. Small, alert, gray-haired woman.

10. Mrs. Jamerson's father, John Ayers, was one of five brothers who originally spelled their name Airs. Because of family trouble in settlement of father's estate in Scotland the four brothers who came to America changed their name. John Ayers, so his daughter said, built the first railroad bridges between Portland and The Dalles, the first boat dock at Celilo, and the first bulkhead at Oregon City.

Form C

Text of Interview (Unedited)

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Works Progress Administration

OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara B. Wrenn Date December 5, 1938

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject Early Songs and Ballads.

Name and address of informant Mrs. Cora Jamerson 1917 SW Third Street, Portland, Oregon.

Text:

My father, John Ayers, when he came from California to Oregon in 1852, worked for some time for Barlow of the Barlow Route. Mrs. Barlow after settlement where they lived so long, what is now Barlow Station, was considered quite the lady of the country roundabout. My mother was with her a lot. After Abraham Lincoln's inauguration Mrs. Barlow pieced him a quilt of silk ribbon. There was a wide border all around the quilt, and this border was embroidered in red roses. Mother helped her on it, and was always very proud of her share in the work.

Mother used to sing to us a lot, lullabys, old ballads and so on. One of her favorites was 'The Drunkard's Dream.' My sister has a copy of that and I'll write and get it for you. She had a lot of old lullabys and I think sister has some of those too. Father played the violin and we used to sing together. Father never approved of kissing games. There were two games we used to play. I don't remember just how we played them, but the names were 'As the Mill Goes 'Round', and 'Pop Goes the Weasel'. There was a big family of us in our youth — ten altogether. My brother, John, who died October 12, 1937, was the inventor

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of the cigar log boom, that could withstand almost any sort of high seas. The first log raft got loose and was lost two months before being found and then it was all there, not a log missing.

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Mother died last year, She was 91 years old. She looked young and felt young clear up to the last. She was married to father when she was 14 years old and he was thirty. Father died at the age of 63.

In going through some discarded papers of Mrs. McGrath in the basement I found a letter apparently written by her and not sent, relating to Homer Davenport. I have no use for it and will give it to you. It is unsigned.

(Copy of letter, original of which is in files).

"Dear Friends, Bessie and Jim:

Well here I am, writing to you for reference. There was a girl here who heard I was from Silverton and asked me to give her some information about Homer Davenport. Seems like Homer was quite a hero amongst the Portland people. Well I wrote down all I could think of when he was quite young, and if you know anything I would be very grateful to you. We never knew much about him after his father sold the farm and moved to Silverton.

At the time he came to our house he was 8 or 10. Was on the trade for chickens. We had one of the largest roosters I ever seen, and Homer said he must have him, so my mother gave him to Homer. He was a fighter, and he matched him up with another, and presume they made a lot of fun. The poor boy was always hungry. When my brother would see him coming he would say to mother, 'Here Homer comes, get out your pie and doughnuts.' He was always drawing pictures. Said to me, 'Adele, you have the talent, why don't you study to paint?'

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I would watch him draw houses and go do them too, so that is why I love to paint houses and trees. He put me next to it. I might have been 100 per cent artist if I had studied it."

Form D

Extra Comment

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OREGON FOLKLORE STUDIES

Name of worker Sara Wrenn Date December 5, 1938

Address 505 Elks Building, Portland, Oregon

Subject Early Songs and Ballads.

Name and address of informant Mrs. Cora Jamerson 1917 SW Third Street, Portland, Oregon.

Comment:

Mrs. Jamerson was very cooperative and helpful, and called up a number of people over the telephone, trying to secure interviews for me. She promised to write her sister, who lives somewhere in Washington, for copies of the lullabys and the close-to-a-hundred-year-old popular ballad of the Drunkard's Dream.

She was unable to obtain any interviews, however, but did give the name of Mr. Haberly, Third and Harrison Streets, who knows Silverton.